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THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP  
AND OTHER POEMS

BY

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

*WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES*



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## INTRODUCTION.

MR. LONGFELLOW's birthplace was in a sea-port, and his youth and early manhood were passed in intimate association with sea-life. In his half-autobiographical reverie *My Lost Youth* he records something of the effect which these associations had upon his mind. Afterward, when living in Cambridge, he was wont to spend his summers at his cottage in Nahant. One after another there occurred to him poems which had their suggestion in sea-scenes; and in April, 1849, when casting about for a convenient grouping for a volume of his uncollected poems, he found that a natural one was indicated by the double title *By the Fireside and By the Seaside*. There were hardly enough poems to make a satisfactory volume, and he was dispirited by his apparent inability to write a poem of any importance. He wrote in his diary: "No new thing to start the stagnant current. Oh for 'some great idea to refresh me!' I am pondering on a continuation of *Hyperion*." His wish, as he records it, reminds us of the saying of Herder, a German poet, when lying weakly in sickness: "Give me a great thought, that I may quicken myself with it."

In a few weeks Mr. Longfellow seems to have conceived the plan of *The Building of the Ship*, which he began June 18, 1849. Work upon it, however, was interrupted by the illness and death of his father, which

took him to Portland and detained him there, but not unlikely his stay in the city by the sea gave him opportunity for brooding over the poem. "I prefer the seaside to the country," he once said; "the idea of liberty is stronger there." At any rate, in September he was again engaged upon the poem, and on the 20th noted: "*The Building of the Ship* goes on. It will be rather long. Will it be good?" On the 22d he finished the poem; and as it easily took prominence in the new volume, he changed his proposed title to *The Seaside and the Fireside*, and led off with his new poem.

The form of this poem was clearly suggested by Schiller's *Song of the Bell*, which, tracing the history of a bell from the first finding of the metal to the hanging of the bell in the tower, so minglesthe history of human life with it that the bell becomes the symbol of humanity. Schiller's poem introduced a new artistic form which has since been copied more than once, but nowhere so successfully as in *The Building of the Ship*. The changes in the measure mark the quickening or retarding of the thought. The reader will be interested in watching these changes, and observing the fitness with which the short lines express the quicker, more sudden or hurried action, while the longer ones indicate lingering, moderate action or reflection. The oratorical character of the poem, so to speak, has always caught the ear; and it is interesting to read in the poet's diary, shortly after the publication of the book, this entry:—

"February 12, 1850. In the evening Mrs. Kemble read before the Mercantile Library Association, to an audience of more than three thousand, portions of *As You Like It*; then *The Building of the Ship*, standing out upon the platform, book in hand, trembling, palpitat-

ing, and weeping, and giving every word its true weight and emphasis. She prefaced the recital by a few words to this effect: that when she first saw the poem, she desired to read it before a Boston audience; and she hoped she would be able to make every word audible to that great multitude."

By this graceful action Mrs. Kemble may well have thrown into concrete form the lines with which Mr. Longfellow closed the sonnet commemorating her readings from Shakespeare: —

“O happy Poet! . . .  
How must thy listening spirit now rejoice  
To be interpreted by such a voice! ”

But it is to be suspected that, while Mr. Longfellow might smilingly have transferred his address to Shakespeare to himself, the vast multitude was stirred to its depths, not so much by the artistic completeness of the rendering as by the impassioned burst with which the poem closes, and which fell upon no listless ears in the deep agitation of the eventful year 1850. Mr. Noah Brooks, in his paper on *Lincoln's Imagination* (*Scribner's Monthly*, August, 1879), mentions that he found the President one day attracted by these closing stanzas, which were quoted in a political speech: “Knowing the whole poem,” he adds, “as one of my early exercises in recitation, I began, at his request, with the description of the launch of the ship, and repeated it to the end. As he listened to the last lines [377-398], his eyes were filled with tears, and his cheeks were wet. He did not speak for some minutes, but finally said, with simplicity: ‘It is a wonderful gift to be able to stir men like that.’” Dr. William Everett, in his remarks before the *Massachusetts Historical Soci-*

ety, after the death of Mr. Longfellow, called attention to the striking contrast in these spirited, hopeful lines to Horace's timid, tremulous *O navis*. Yet, curiously enough, this impressive close of the poem was an after-thought. He wrote at first a sad ending which left the thought of the poem confined. After he had sent the volume in manuscript to his publisher, he conceived the nobler, more inspiriting interpretation of the poetic thought, and substituted the lines for what he had first written. Perhaps he was led to this by the suggestion contained in lines 100-104. The discarded lines will be found in a foot-note at the end of the poem.

In his diary, under date of March 23, 1850, Mr. Longfellow writes: "Cast lead flat-irons for the children, to their great delight, — C. in great and joyous excitement, which he showed by the most voluble speech. E. showed his only in his eyes, and looked on in silence. The casting was to them as grand as the casting of a bell to grown-up children. Why not write for them a *Song of the Lead Flat-Iron?*"

What a pity he never did!

## THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP.

“ BUILD me straight, O worthy Master !  
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,  
That shall laugh at all disaster,  
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle ! ”

- 5 The merchant’s word  
Delighted the Master heard ;  
For his heart was in his work, and the heart  
Giveth grace unto every Art.
- 10 As the eddies and dimples of the tide  
Play round the bows of ships,  
That steadily at anchor ride.  
And with a voice that was full of glee,  
He answered, “ Ere long we will launch
- 15 A vessel as goodly, and strong, and staunch,  
As ever weathered a wintry sea ! ”  
And first with nicest skill and art,  
Perfect and finished in every part,  
A little model the Master wrought,
- 20 Which should be to the larger plan  
What the child is to the man,  
Its counterpart in miniature ;  
That with a hand more swift and sure  
The greater labor might be brought
- 25 To answer to his inward thought.

And as he labored his mind ran o'er  
 The various ships that were built of yore,  
 And above them all, and strangest of all,  
 Towered the Great Harry, crank and tall,  
 30 Whose picture was hanging on the wall,  
 With bows and stern raised high in air,  
 And balconies hanging here and there,  
 And signal lanterns and flags afloat,  
 And eight round towers, like those that frown  
 35 From some old castle, looking down  
 Upon the drawbridge and the moat.  
 And he said, with a smile, "Our ship, I wis,  
 Shall be of another form than this!"  
 It was of another form, indeed;  
 40 Built for freight, and yet for speed,  
 A beautiful and gallant craft;  
 Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,  
 Pressing down upon sail and mast,  
 Might not the sharp bows overwhelm;

29. *The Great Harry* was a famous ship built for the English navy in the reign of King Henry VII. Henry found the small navy left by Edward IV. in a very weak condition, and he undertook to reconstruct it. The most famous ship in Edward's navy was named *Grace à Dieu*, and Henry named his *Harry Grace à Dieu*, but she was more generally named as the *Great Harry*. On the accession of Henry VIII. her name was changed to the *Regent*, but when, a few years afterward, she was burnt in an engagement with the French, the ship built in her place resumed the old name, and became a second *Great Harry*. It was this ship that the poet describes. She was a thousand tons burden, which was regarded as an immense size in those days, and her crew and armament were out of all proportion, as we should think now. She carried seven hundred men, and a hundred and twenty-two guns; but of these most were very small. Thirty-four were eighteen-pounders, and were called *culverins*. There were also *semi-culverins*, or nine-pounders, while the rest only carried one or two pounds, and were variously named *falcons*, *falconets*, *serpentines*, *sabins*.

35. The likeness of parts of early ships to castles, and the use to which they were put, survive in the term *forecastle*.

45 Broad in the beam, but sloping aft  
 With graceful curve and slow degrees,  
 That she might be docile to the helm,  
 And that the currents of parted seas,  
 Closing behind, with mighty force,  
 50 Might aid and not impede her course.

In the ship-yard stood the Master,  
 With the model of the vessel,  
 That should laugh at all disaster,  
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !

55 Covering many a rood of ground,  
 Lay the timber piled around ;  
 Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,  
 And scattered here and there, with these,  
 The knarred and crooked cedar knees ;

60 Brought from regions far away,  
 From Pascagoula's sunny bay,  
 And the banks of the roaring Roanoke !  
 Ah ! what a wondrous thing it is  
 To note how many wheels of toil

65 One thought, one word, can set in motion !  
 There's not a ship that sails the ocean,  
 But every climate, every soil,  
 Must bring its tribute, great or small,  
 And help to build the wooden wall !

69. The *wooden wall* is, of course, the ship. The reference is to a proverbial expression of very ancient date. When the Greeks sent to Delphi to ask how they were to defend themselves against Xerxes, who had invaded their country, the oracle replied :—

“Pallas hath urged, and Zeus, the sire of all,  
 Hath safety promised in wooden wall ;  
 Seed-time and harvest, weeping sires shall tell  
 How thousands fought at Salamis and fell.”

The Greeks interpreted this as a caution to trust in their navy, and the battle at Salamis resulted in the overthrow of the Persians and discomfiture of their fleet.

70 The sun was rising o'er the sea,  
 And long the level shadows lay,  
 As if they, too, the beams would be

73 Of some great, airy argosy,  
 Framed and launched in a single day.

75 That silent architect, the sun,  
 Had hewn and laid them every one,  
 Ere the work of man was yet begun.  
 Beside the Master, when he spoke,  
 A youth, against an anchor leaning,

80 Listened, to catch his slightest meaning.  
 Only the long waves, as they broke  
 In ripples on the pebbly beach,  
 Interrupted the old man's speech.  
 Beautiful they were, in sooth,

85 The old man and the fiery youth !  
 The old man, in whose busy brain  
 Many a ship that sailed the main  
 Was modelled o'er and o'er again ; —

73. A richly freighted ship. The word is formed from *Argo*, the name of the fabled ship which brought back the golden fleece from Colchis. Shakespeare uses the word, as in *The Taming of the Shrew* : —

“That she shall have ; besides an argosy  
 That now is lying in Marseilles' road.”

Act II. Scene 1.

And in *The Merchant of Venice* : —

“He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies ; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England.”

Act I. Scene 3.

87. The *main* is the great ocean as distinguished from the bays, gulfs, and inlets. Curiously enough, it means also the main-land, and was used in both senses by Elizabethan writers. In *King Lear*, Act III. Scene I, —

“Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,  
 Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,” —

some commentators take “main” to be the main-land, but a better sense seems to refer it to the open sea when a storm is raging. Yet the name of Spanish Main was given to the northern coast of South America when that country was taken possession of by Spain.

The fiery youth, who was to be  
 90 The heir of his dexterity,  
 The heir of his house, and his daughter's hand,  
 When he had built and launched from land  
 What the elder head had planned.

“ Thus,” said he, “ will we build this ship !  
 95 Lay square the blocks upon the slip,  
 And follow well this plan of mine.  
 Choose the timbers with greatest care ;  
 Of all that is unsound beware ;  
 For only what is sound and strong  
 100 To this vessel shall belong.  
 Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine  
 Here together shall combine.  
 A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,  
 And the UNION be her name !  
 105 For the day that gives her to the sea  
 Shall give my daughter unto thee ! ”

The Master's word  
 Enraptured the young man heard ;  
 And as he turned his face aside,  
 110 With a look of joy and a thrill of pride,  
 Standing before  
 Her father's door,  
 He saw the form of his promised bride.

95. The *slip* is the inclined bank on which the ship is built. A similar meaning attaches to the use of the word locally in New York, where Peck Slip, Coenties Slip, Burling Slip, originally denoted the inclined openings between wharves.

104. Here, as was noted in the preface when speaking of Schiller's *Song of the Bell*, the poet touches the ship with a special human interest, and by his reference to Maine cedar, and Georgia pine, half reveals the larger and wider sense of the building of the ship, which is disclosed at the end of the poem.

The sun shone on her golden hair,

116 And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair,  
 With the breath of morn and the soft sea air.  
 Like a beauteous barge was she,  
 Still at rest on the sandy beach,  
 Just beyond the billow's reach ;

120 But he  
 Was the restless, seething, stormy sea !

Ah, how skilful grows the hand

That obeyeth Love's command !

It is the heart, and not the brain,

125 That to the highest doth attain,  
 And he who followeth Love's behest  
 Far excelleth all the rest !

Thus with the rising of the sun

Was the noble task begun,

130 And soon throughout the ship-yard's bounds

Were heard the intermingled sounds

Of axes and of mallets, plied

With vigorous arms on every side ;

Plied so deftly and so well,

135 That, ere the shadows of evening fell,

The keel of oak for a noble ship,

Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,

Was lying ready, and stretched along

The blocks, well placed upon the slip.

140 Happy, thrice happy, every one

Who sees his labor well begun,

And not perplexed and multiplied,

By idly waiting for time and tide !

And when the hot, long day was o'er,  
 145 The young man at the Master's door  
     Sat with the maiden calm and still,  
     And within the porch, a little more  
     Removed beyond the evening chill,  
     The father sat, and told them tales  
 150 Of wrecks in the great September gales,  
     Of pirates coasting the Spanish Main,  
     And ships that never came back again,  
     The chance and change of a sailor's life,  
     Want and plenty, rest and strife,  
 155 His roving fancy, like the wind,  
     That nothing can stay and nothing can bind,  
     And the magic charm of foreign lands,  
     With shadows of palms, and shining sands,  
     Where the tumbling surf,  
 160 O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar,  
     Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar,  
     As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.  
     And the trembling maiden held her breath  
     At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,  
 165 With all its terror and mystery  
     The dim, dark sea, so like unto Death,

150. September is a month in which great gales are very apt to occur, but when this poem was written the most famous gale in the memory of men living was that of 1815, known as the great September gale.

151. See note to line 87. Here the *Spanish Main* is used, as was most anciently the custom, of the northern coast of South America. This is probably also the sense in the *Wreck of the Hesperus* : —

“ Then up and spake an old Sailor,  
     Had sailed to the Spanish Main,  
     ‘ I pray thee put into yonder port,  
     For I fear a hurricane.’ ”

153. “ That, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by Thy most gracious and ready help.” From a collect in the Communion Office, Book of Common Prayer.

That divides and yet unites mankind !  
 And whenever the old man paused, a gleam  
 From the bowl of his pipe would awhile illumine

170 The silent group in the twilight gloom,  
 And thoughtful faces, as in a dream ;  
 And for a moment one might mark  
 What had been hidden by the dark,  
 That the head of the maiden lay at rest,  
 175 Tenderly, on the young man's breast !

Day by day the vessel grew,  
 With timbers fashioned strong and true,  
 Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,  
 Till, framed with perfect symmetry,

180 A skeleton ship rose up to view !  
 And around the bows and along the side  
 The heavy hammers and mallets plied,  
 Till after many a week, at length,  
 Wonderful for form and strength,  
 185 Sublime in its enormous bulk,  
 Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk !  
 And around it columns of smoke, upwreathing,  
 Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething,  
 Cauldron, that glowed,

190 And overflowed  
 With the black tar, heated for the sheathing.

And amid the clamors  
 Of clattering hammers,

He who listened heard now and then

195 The song of the Master and his men : —

“ Build me straight, O worthy Master,  
 Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,

That shall laugh at all disaster,  
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle ! ”

200 With oaken brace and copper band,  
Lay the rudder on the sand,  
That, like a thought, should have control  
Over the movement of the whole ;  
And near it the anchor, whose giant hand  
205 Would reach down and grapple with the land,  
And immovable and fast  
Hold the great ship against the bellowing blast !  
And at the bows an image stood,  
By a cunning artist carved in wood,  
210 With robes of white, that far behind  
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.  
It was not shaped in a classic mould,  
Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,  
Or Naiad rising from the water,  
215 But modelled from the Master’s daughter.  
On many a dreary and misty night,  
‘T will be seen by the rays of the signal light,  
Speeding along through the rain and the dark,  
Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,  
220 The pilot of some phantom bark,  
Guiding the vessel, in its flight,  
By a path none other knows aright !

214. Strictly speaking, the *Naiad* was a nymph, the nymphs being the inferior order of deities that were supposed to reside in different parts of nature, naiads in the sea, dryads in trees, oreads in mountains.

215. Hawthorne has a charming story upon the romance of a figure-head in *Drowne’s Wooden Image in Mosses from an Old Manse*.

219. *Sarks* or shifts were made first of silk, whence the name, derived from the Latin *sericum*, silk.

Behold, at last,  
 Each tall and tapering mast  
 225 Is swung into its place ;  
 Shrouds and stays  
 Holding it firm and fast !

Long ago,  
 In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,  
 230 When upon mountain and plain  
 Lay the snow,  
 They fell, — those lordly pines !  
 Those grand, majestic pines !  
 'Mid shouts and cheers  
 235 The jaded steers,  
 Panting beneath the goad,  
 Dragged down the weary, winding road  
 Those captive kings so straight and tall,  
 To be shorn of their streaming hair,  
 240 And, naked and bare,  
 To feel the stress and the strain  
 Of the wind and the reeling main,  
 Whose roar

225. Mr. Longfellow printed the following note to this and the two preceding lines : "I wish to anticipate a criticism on this passage by stating, that sometimes, though not usually, vessels are launched fully rigged and sparr'd. I have availed myself of the exception, as better suited to my purposes than the general rule ; but the reader will see that it is neither a blunder nor a poetic license. On this subject a friend in Portland, Maine, writes me thus : 'In this State, and also, I am told, in New York, ships are sometimes rigged upon the stocks, in order to save time, or to make a show. There was a fine, large ship launched last summer at Ellsworth, fully rigged and sparr'd. Some years ago a ship was launched here with her rigging, spars, sails, and cargo aboard. She sailed the next day and was never heard of again ! I hope this will not be the fate of your poem !'"

Would remind them for evermore  
 245 Of their native forests they should not see again.

And everywhere  
 The slender, graceful spars  
 Poise aloft in the air,  
 And at the mast-head,  
 250 White, blue, and red,  
 A flag unrolls the Stripes and Stars.  
 Ah ! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,  
 In foreign harbors shall behold  
 That flag unrolled,  
 255 'T will be as a friendly hand  
 Stretched out from his native land,  
 Filling his heart with memories sweet and end-  
 less !

All is finished ! and at length  
 Has come the bridal day  
 260 Of beauty and of strength.  
 To-day the vessel shall be launched !  
 With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,  
 And o'er the bay,  
 Slowly, in all his splendors dight,  
 265 The great sun rises to behold the sight.

The ocean old,  
 Centuries old,  
 Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,  
 Paces restless to and fro,

266. This and the next eighteen lines illustrate well the skill with which the poet changes the length of the lines to denote an impatient, abrupt, and as it were short-breathing movement.

270 Up and down the sands of gold.

His beating heart is not at rest;  
And far and wide,  
With ceaseless flow,  
His beard of snow

275 Heaves with the heaving of his breast.

He waits impatient for his bride.

There she stands,  
With her foot upon the sands,  
Decked with flags and streamers gay,

280 In honor of her marriage day,

Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,  
Round her like a veil descending,  
Ready to be  
The bride of the gray old sea.

285 On the deck another bride

Is standing by her lover's side.  
Shadows from the flags and shrouds,  
Like the shadows cast by clouds,  
Broken by many a sunny fleck,

290 Fall around them on the deck.

The prayer is said,

The service read,

The joyous bridegroom bows his head;

And in tears the good old Master

295 Shakes the brown hand of his son,

Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek  
In silence, for he cannot speak,  
And ever faster  
Down his own the tears begin to run.

300 The worthy pastor —

The shepherd of that wandering flock,  
 That has the ocean for its wold,  
 That has the vessel for its fold,  
 Leaping ever from rock to rock —

305 Spake, with accents mild and clear,  
 Words of warning, words of cheer,  
 But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.  
 He knew the chart  
 Of the sailor's heart,

310 All its pleasures and its griefs,  
 All its shallows and rocky reefs,  
 All those secret currents, that flow  
 With such resistless undertow,  
 And lift and drift, with terrible force,

315 The will from its moorings and its course.

Therefore he spake, and thus said he : —  
 “ Like unto ships far off at sea,  
 Outward or homeward, bound are we.  
 Before, behind, and all around,  
 320 Floats and swings the horizon's bound,  
 Seems at its distant rim to rise  
 And climb the crystal wall of the skies,  
 And then again to turn and sink,  
 As if we could slide from its outer brink.

325 Ah ! it is not the sea,  
 It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,  
 But ourselves  
 That rock and rise

301. Although this term does not necessarily imply any particular person, it is not unlikely that the poet was thinking, when he wrote the lines that follow, of Father Taylor, a famous minister to seamen, whose work in Boston attracted great attention.

321. When first printed, this line ran, —

“ Seems at its outer rim to rise.”

With endless and uneasy motion,

330 Now touching the very skies,  
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.  
Ah ! if our souls but poise and swing  
Like the compass in its brazen ring,  
Ever level and ever true

335 To the toil and the task we have to do,  
We shall sail securely, and safely reach  
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach  
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,  
Will be those of joy and not of fear ! ”

340 Then the Master,  
With a gesture of command,  
Waved his hand ;  
And at the word,  
Loud and sudden there was heard,

345 All around them and below,  
The sound of hammers, blow on blow,  
Knocking away the shores and spurs.  
And see ! she stirs !  
She starts, — she moves, — she seems to feel  
350 The thrill of life along her keel,  
And, spurning with her foot the ground,  
With one exulting, joyous bound,  
She leaps into the ocean’s arms !

And lo ! from the assembled crowd

355 There rose a shout, prolonged and loud,  
That to the ocean seemed to say,  
“ Take her, Oh bridegroom, old and gray,

337. The *Fortunate Isles*, or *Isles of the Blest*, were imaginary islands in the West, in classic mythology, set in a sea which was warmed by the rays of the declining sun. Hither the favorites of the gods were borne and dwelt in endless joy.

Take her to thy protecting arms,  
With all her youth and all her charms !”

360 How beautiful she is ! How fair  
She lies within those arms, that press  
Her form with many a soft caress  
Of tenderness and watchful care !  
Sail forth into the sea, O ship !

365 Through wind and wave, right onward steer !  
The moistened eye, the trembling lip,  
Are not the signs of doubt or fear.

Sail forth into the sea of life,  
O gentle, loving, trusting wife,  
370 And safe from all adversity  
Upon the bosom of that sea  
Thy comings and thy goings be !  
For gentleness and love and trust  
Prevail o'er angry wave and gust ;  
375 And in the wreck of noble lives  
Something immortal still survives !

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State !  
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great !  
Humanity with all its fears,  
380 With all the hopes of future years,  
Is hanging breathless on thy fate !  
We know what Master laid thy keel,  
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,  
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,  
385 What anvils rang, what hammers beat,  
In what a forge and what a heat  
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope !

Fear not each sudden sound and shock,  
 'T is of the wave and not the rock ;  
 320 'T is but the flapping of the sail,  
 And not a rent made by the gale !  
 In spite of rock and tempest's roar,  
 In spite of false lights on the shore,  
 Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea !  
 325 Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,  
 Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,  
 Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,  
 Are all with thee,— are all with thee !

393. The reference is to the treacherous display, by wreckers, of lights upon a dangerous coast, to attract vessels in a storm, that they may be wrecked and become the spoil of the thieves.

398. The closing lines gather into strong verses, like a choral, the cumulative meaning of the poem, which builds upon the material structure of the ship the fancy of the bridal of sea and ship, the domestic life of man and the national life.

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The original ending of the poem, referred to in the Introduction, is as follows : —

360 How beautiful she is ! How still  
 She lies within these arms that press  
 Her form with many a soft caress !  
 Modelled with such perfect skill,  
 Fashioned with such watchful care !  
 365 But, alas ! oh, what and where  
 Shall be the end of a thing so fair ?  
 Wrecked upon some treacherous rock,  
 Or rotting in some noisome dock, —  
 Such the end must be at length  
 370 Of all this loveliness and strength.

They who with transcendent power  
 Build the great cathedral tower,  
 Build the palaces and domes,  
 Temples of God and princes' homes, —  
 375 These leave a record and a name.  
 But he who builds the stately ships,

The palaces of sea and air,  
When he is buried in his grave  
Leaves no more trace or mark behind  
380 Than the sail does in the wind,  
Than the keel does in the wave.  
He whose dexterous hand could frame  
All this beauty, all this grace,  
In a grave without a name  
385 Lies forgotten of his race !

It is easy to see the immense superiority of the lines which the poet substituted for these. Besides getting rid of a sentiment which is scarcely founded on fact, — for the names of the builders of the cathedrals and palaces are hardly better known than those of naval architects,— the poet led the previous thought of the poem to a climax, and gave a largeness to the entire conception which otherwise would have been lacking.

## THE MASQUE OF PANDORA.

In the time of Shakespeare and later there were many masques written, which were given as entertainments before the court or in noblemen's houses. They were given often in connection with birthday or marriage festivals, and differed from ordinary plays in having for characters chiefly gods, heroes, mythical personages, or personified virtues, and the action was not that of every-day life, but of the fancy. The persons who acted wore masks when it was wished to get rid of the ordinary human face. One of the most beautiful masques in English literature is Milton's *Masque of Comus*.

This masque by Mr. Longfellow takes for its subject a Greek myth. Those who have read Hawthorne's story of *The Paradise of Children*, in *The Wonder-Book*, will recall the story. Readers of Mr. Longfellow's poems will also remember his two companion pieces of *Prometheus* and *Epimetheus*. See also Mr. Lowell's poem, *Prometheus*. Those who desire to pursue the subject still further will find two valuable papers on *The Prometheus of Aeschylus*, by William Cranston Lawton, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for August and September, 1888.

The *Masque of Pandora*, begun February 22, 1875, and finished March 25, originally bore the titles, successively, *Epimetheus: a Dramatic Idyl*, and *The Masque of Epimetheus*. It was brought out at the Boston Theatre, in an adaptation to the stage by Bolton Rowe, with

music by Alfred Cellier, January 10, 1881. Mr. Longfellow wrote for Miss Blanche Roosevelt, who was principally concerned in putting it on the stage, and who took the part of Pandora, the following song and chorus:—

What place is this? Oh, tell me, I implore!  
 Tell me what I am feeling, hearing, seeing;  
 If this be life, oh give me more and more,  
 Till I am filled with the delight of being.

What forms mysterious people this dark space?  
 What voices and what sounds of music greet me?  
 And who are these, so fair in form and face,  
 That with such gracious welcome come to meet me?

CHORUS.

Blow, bellows, blow! and keep the flame from dying,  
 Till from the iron on our anvils lying  
 We forge the thunderbolts of Zeus supreme,  
 Whose smothered lightnings in the ashes gleam.

The poet has followed the ancient myth with little variation, and has introduced, allusively, a number of classical stories. Any intelligent student, with the aid of a classical dictionary, or with the succinct definitions in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, can work out these separate myths, and therefore it is thought best not to provide explanatory foot-notes to the *Masque*. As a clue to the meaning, however, the following list of the personal names in the *Masque* is given, with their Latin nearest equivalents, when there are such, and with the interpretation of the original Greek titles. The Latin names are in Italic.

Admetus, the Untamed.  
 Alectryon, a cock.  
 Aphrodite, *Venus*, Foam-born.  
 Atropos, the Unchangeable.  
 Callirhoe, the Beautifully-flowing.

Callisto, the Most Beautiful.  
 Centaurs, the Air-piercers.  
 Clotho, the Twister.  
 Echo, Sound.  
 Epimetheus, Afterthought.

Erebus, the Covered (= Darkness).	Lachesis, the Allotter.
Eros, <i>Amor</i> , Love.	Oceanides, Ocean-nymphs.
Eumenides, the Gracious Ones (to appease the Furies, as they really were).	Pandora, the All-gifted.
Helios, the Sun.	Poseidon, <i>Neptunus</i> .
Hephaestus, <i>Vulcan</i> (the god of fire).	Prometheus, Forethought.
Hera, <i>Juno</i> (wife of Zeus).	Thalia, the Blooming One (one of the three Graces).
Heracles, <i>Hercules</i> .	Titan, the Striver.
Hermes, <i>Mercurius</i> .	Urania, the Heavenly One.
Hyperion, the Mover in the upper air.	Zephyrus, the Northwest wind.
Kronos, <i>Saturnus</i> , Time.	Zeus, <i>Jupiter</i> .

## I.

### THE WORKSHOP OF HEPHÆSTUS.

HEPHÆSTUS (*standing before the statue of PANDORA*).

Nor fashioned out of gold, like Hera's throne,  
Nor forged of iron like the thunderbolts  
Of Zeus omnipotent, or other works  
Wrought by my hands at Lemnos or Olympus,  
5 But moulded in soft clay, that unresisting  
Yields itself to the touch, this lovely form  
Before me stands, perfect in every part.  
Not Aphrodite's self appeared more fair,  
When first upwafted by caressing winds  
10 She came to high Olympus, and the gods  
Paid homage to her beauty. Thus her hair  
Was cinctured ; thus her floating drapery  
Was like a cloud about her, and her face  
Was radiant with the sunshine and the sea.

### THE VOICE OF ZEUS.

15 Is thy work done, Hephæstus ?

HEPHÆSTUS.

It is finished !

### THE VOICE.

Not finished till I breathe the breath of life  
Into her nostrils, and she moves and speaks.

## HEPHÆSTUS.

Will she become immortal like ourselves ?

## THE VOICE.

The form that thou hast fashioned out of clay  
 20 Is of the earth and mortal ; but the spirit,  
 The life, the exhalation of my breath,  
 Is of diviner essence and immortal.  
 The gods shall shower on her their benefactions,  
 She shall possess all gifts : the gift of song,  
 25 The gift of eloquence, the gift of beauty,  
 The fascination and the nameless charm  
 That shall lead all men captive.

## HEPHÆSTUS.

Wherefore ? wherefore ?

*A wind shakes the house.*

I hear the rushing of a mighty wind  
 Through all the halls and chambers of my house !  
 30 Her parted lips inhale it, and her bosom  
 Heaves with the inspiration. As a reed  
 Beside a river in the rippling current  
 Bends to and fro, she bows or lifts her head.  
 She gazes round about as if amazed ;  
 35 She is alive ; she breathes, but yet she speaks not !

PANDORA *descends from the pedestal.*

## CHORUS OF THE GRACES.

## AGLAIA.

In the workshop of Hcpæstus  
 What is this I see ?

Have the Gods to four increased us  
 Who were only three ?  
 40 Beautiful in form and feature,  
 Lovely as the day,  
 Can there be so fair a creature  
 Formed of common clay ?

## THALIA.

O sweet, pale face ! O lovely eyes of azure,  
 45 Clear as the waters of a brook that run  
 Limpid and laughing in the summer sun !  
 O golden hair that like a miser's treasure  
 In its abundance overflows the measure !  
 O graceful form, that cloudlike floatest on  
 50 With the soft, undulating gait of one  
 Who moveth as if motion were a pleasure !  
 By what name shall I call thee ? Nymph or Muse,  
 Callirrhoë or Urania ? Some sweet name  
 Whose every syllable is a caress  
 55 Would best befit thee ; but I cannot choose,  
 Nor do I care to choose ; for still the same,  
 Nameless or named, will be thy loveliness.

## EUPHROSYNE.

Dowered with all celestial gifts,  
 Skilled in every art  
 60 That ennobles and uplifts  
 And delights the heart,  
 Fair on earth shall be thy fame  
 As thy face is fair,  
 And Pandora be the name  
 65 Thou henceforth shalt bear.

## II.

## OLYMPUS.

HERMES (*putting on his sandals*).

MUCH must he toil who serves the Immortal Gods,  
And I, who am their herald, most of all.  
No rest have I, nor respite. I no sooner  
Unclasp the winged sandals from my feet,  
70 Than I again must clasp them, and depart  
Upon some foolish errand. But to-day  
The errand is not foolish. Never yet  
With greater joy did I obey the summons  
That sends me earthward. I will fly so swiftly  
75 That my caduceus in the whistling air  
Shall make a sound like the Pandæan pipes,  
Cheating the shepherds ; for to-day I go,  
Commissioned by high-thundering Zeus, to lead  
A maiden to Prometheus, in his tower,  
80 And by my cunning arguments persuade him  
To marry her. What mischief lies concealed  
In this design I know not ; but I know  
Who thinks of marrying hath already taken  
One step upon the road to penitence.  
85 Such embassies delight me. Forth I launch  
On the sustaining air, nor fear to fall  
Like Icarus, nor swerve aside like him  
Who drove amiss Hyperion's fiery steeds.  
I sink, I fly ! The yielding element  
90 Folds itself round about me like an arm,  
And holds me as a mother holds her child.

## III.

## TOWER OF PROMETHEUS ON MOUNT CAUCASUS.

PROMETHEUS.

I HEAR the trumpet of Alectryon  
Proclaim the dawn. The stars begin to fade,  
And all the heavens are full of prophecies  
98 And evil auguries. Blood-red last night  
I saw great Kronos rise ; the crescent moon  
Sank through the mist, as if it were the scythe  
His parricidal hand had flung far down  
The western steeps. O ye Immortal Gods,  
100 What evil are ye plotting and contriving ?

HERMES and PANDORA at the threshold.

PANDORA.

I cannot cross the threshold. An unseen  
And icy hand repels me. These blank walls  
Oppress me with their weight !

PROMETHEUS.

Powerful ye are,  
But not omnipotent. Ye cannot fight  
108 Against Necessity. The Fates control you,  
As they do us, and so far we are equals !

PANDORA.

Motionless, passionless, companionless,  
He sits there muttering in his beard. His voice  
Is like a river flowing underground !

HERMES.

110 Prometheus, hail !

PROMETHEUS.

Who calls me ?

HERMES.

It is I.

Dost thou not know me ?

PROMETHEUS.

By thy winged cap

And winged heels I know thee. Thou art Hermes,  
Captain of thieves ! Hast thou again been stealing  
The heifers of Admetus in the sweet115 Meadows of asphodel ? or Hera's girdle ?  
Or the earth-shaking trident of Poseidon ?

HERMES.

And thou, Prometheus ; say, hast thou again  
Been stealing fire from Helios' chariot-wheels  
To light thy furnaces ?

PROMETHEUS.

Why comest thou hither

120 So early in the dawn ?

HERMES.

The Immortal Gods  
Know naught of late or early. Zeus himself  
The omnipotent hath sent me.

PROMETHEUS.

For what purpose?

HERMES.

To bring this maiden to thee.

PROMETHEUS.

I mistrust  
The Gods and all their gifts. If they have sent her  
125 It is for no good purpose.

HERMES.

What disaster  
Could she bring on thy house, who is a woman?

PROMETHEUS.

The Gods are not my friends, nor am I theirs.  
Whatever comes from them, though in a shape  
As beautiful as this, is evil only.

130 Who art thou?

PANDORA.

One who, though to thee unknown,  
Yet knoweth thee.

PROMETHEUS.

How shouldst thou know me, woman?

PANDORA.

Who knoweth not Prometheus the humane?

PROMETHEUS.

Prometheus the unfortunate; to whom  
Both Gods and men have shown themselves ungrateful.

135 When every spark was quenched on every hearth  
 Throughout the earth, I brought to man the fire  
 And all its ministrations. My reward  
 Hath been the rock and vulture.

## HERMES.

But the Gods  
 At last relent and pardon.

## PROMETHEUS.

They relent not ;  
 140 They pardon not ; they are implacable,  
 revengeful, unforgiving !

## HERMES.

As a pledge  
 Of reconciliation they have sent to thee  
 This divine being, to be thy companion,  
 And bring into thy melancholy house  
 145 The sunshine and the fragrance of her youth

## PROMETHEUS.

I need them not. I have within myself  
 All that my heart desires ; the ideal beauty  
 Which the creative faculty of mind  
 Fashions and follows in a thousand shapes  
 150 More lovely than the real. My own thoughts  
 Are my companions ; my designs and labors  
 And aspirations are my only friends.

## HERMES.

Decide not rashly. The decision made  
 Can never be recalled. The Gods implore not,

155 Plead not, solicit not ; they only offer  
 Choice and occasion, which once being passed  
 Return no more. Dost thou accept the gift ?

## PROMETHEUS.

No gift of theirs, in whatsoever shape  
 It comes to me, with whatsoever charm  
 160 To fascinate my sense, will I receive.  
 Leave me.

## PANDORA.

Let us go hence. I will not stay.

## HERMES.

We leave thee to thy vacant dreams, and all  
 The silence and the solitude of thought,  
 The endless bitterness of unbelief,  
 165 The loneliness of existence without love.

## CHORUS OF THE FATES.

## CLOTHO.

How the Titan, the defiant,  
 The self-centred, self-reliant,  
 Wrapped in visions and illusions,  
 Robs himself of life's best gifts !  
 170 Till by all the storm-winds shaken,  
 By the blast of fate o'ertaken,  
 Hopeless, helpless, and forsaken,  
 In the mists of his confusions  
 To the reefs of doom he drifts !

## LACHESIS.

175 Sorely tried and sorely tempted,  
 From no agonies exempted,  
 In the penance of his trial,  
 And the discipline of pain ;  
 Often by illusions cheated,  
 180 Often baffled and defeated  
 In the tasks to be completed,  
 He, by toil and self denial,  
 To the highest shall attain.

## ATROPOS.

Tempt no more the noble schemer ;  
 185 Bear unto some idle dreamer  
 This new toy and fascination,  
 This new dalliance and delight !  
 To the garden where reposes  
 Epimetheus crowned with roses,  
 190 To the door that never closes  
 Upon pleasure and temptation,  
 Bring this vision of the night !

## IV.

## THE AIR.

HERMES (*returning to Olympus*).

As lonely as the tower that he inhabits,  
 As firm and cold as are the crags about him,  
 195 Prometheus stands. The thunderbolts of Zeus  
 Alone can move him ; but the tender heart  
 Of Epimetheus, burning at white heat,  
 Hammers and flames like all his brother's forges !

Now as an arrow from Hyperion's bow,  
 200 My errand done, I fly, I float, I soar  
 Into the air, returning to Olympus.  
 Oh, joy of motion ! Oh, delight to cleave  
 The infinite realms of space, the liquid ether,  
 Through the warm sunshine and the cooling cloud,  
 205 Myself as light as sunbeam or as cloud !  
 With one touch of my swift and winged feet,  
 I spurn the solid earth, and leave it rocking  
 As rocks the bough from which a bird takes wing.

## V.

## THE HOUSE OF EPIMETHEUS.

EPIMETHEUS.

BEAUTIFUL apparition ! go not hence !  
 210 Surely thou art a Goddess, for thy voice  
 Is a celestial melody, and thy form  
 Self-poised as if it floated on the air !

PANDORA.

No Goddess am I, nor of heavenly birth,  
 But a mere woman fashioned out of clay  
 215 And mortal as the rest.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thy face is fair ;  
 There is a wonder in thine azure eyes  
 That fascinates me. Thy whole presence seems  
 A soft desire, a breathing thought of love.  
 Say, would thy star like Merope's grow dim  
 220 If thou shouldst wed beneath thee ?

## PANDORA.

Ask me not;  
 I cannot answer thee. I only know  
 The Gods have sent me hither.

## EPIMETHEUS.

I believe,  
 And thus believing am most fortunate.  
 It was not Hermes led thee here, but Eros,  
 225 And swifter than his arrows were thine eyes  
 In wounding me. There was no moment's space  
 Between my seeing thee and loving thee.  
 Oh, what a telltale face thou hast! Again  
 I see the wonder in thy tender eyes.

## PANDORA.

230 They do but answer to the love in thine,  
 Yet secretly I wonder thou shouldst love me.  
 Thou knowest me not.

## EPIMETHEUS.

Perhaps I know thee better  
 Than had I known thee longer. Yet it seems  
 That I have always known thee, and but now  
 235 Have found thee. Ah, I have been waiting long.

## PANDORA.

How beautiful is this house! The atmosphere  
 Breathes rest and comfort, and the many chambers  
 Seem full of welcomes.

## EPIMETHEUS.

They not only seem,

But truly are. This dwelling and its master  
 240 Belong to thee.

PANDORA.

Here let me stay forever !  
 There is a spell upon me.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thou thyself  
 Art the enchantress, and I feel thy power  
 Envelop me, and wrap my soul and sense  
 In an Elysian dream.

PANDORA.

Oh, let me stay.  
 245 How beautiful are all things round about me,  
 Multiplied by the mirrors on the walls !  
 What treasures hast thou here ! Yon oaken chest,  
 Carven with figures and embossed with gold,  
 Is wonderful to look upon ! What choice  
 250 And precious things dost thou keep hidden in it ?

EPIMETHEUS.

I know not. 'T is a mystery.

PANDORA.

Hast thou never  
 Lifted the lid ?

EPIMETHEUS.

The oracle forbids.  
 Safely concealed there from all mortal eyes  
 Forever sleeps the secret of the Gods.

255 Seek not to know what they have hidden from thee,  
Till they themselves reveal it.

## PANDORA.

As thou wilt.

## EPIMETHEUS.

Let us go forth from this mysterious place.  
The garden walks are pleasant at this hour ;  
The nightingales among the sheltering boughs  
260 Of populous and many-nested trees  
Shall teach me how to woo thee, and shall tell me  
By what resistless charms or incantations  
They won their mates.

## PANDORA.

Thou dost not need a teacher.

*They go out.*

## CHORUS OF THE EUMENIDES.

What the Immortals  
265 Confide to thy keeping,  
Tell unto no man ;  
Waking or sleeping,  
Closed be thy portals  
To friend as to foeman.

270 Silence conceals it ;  
The word that is spoken  
Betrays and reveals it ;  
By breath or by token  
The charm may be broken.

260. Compare *Evangeline*, 136.

275 With shafts of their splendors  
 The Gods unforgiving  
 Pursue the offenders,  
 The dead and the living !  
 Fortune forsakes them,  
 280 Nor earth shall abide them,  
 Nor Tartarus hide them ;  
 Swift wrath overtakes them !

With useless endeavor,  
 Forever, forever,  
 285 Is Sisyphus rolling  
 His stone up the mountain !  
 Immersed in the fountain,  
 Tantalus tastes not  
 The water that wastes not !  
 290 Through ages increasing  
 The pangs that afflict him,  
 With motion unceasing  
 The wheel of Ixion  
 Shall torture its victim !

## VI.

## IN THE GARDEN.

## EPIMETHEUS.

295 YON snow-white cloud that sails sublime in ether  
 Is but the sovereign Zeus, who like a swan  
 Flies to fair-ankled Leda !

## PANDORA.

Or perchance

Ixion's cloud, the shadowy shape of Hera,  
That bore the Centaurs.

## EPIMETHEUS.

The divine and human.

## CHORUS OF BIRDS.

300 Gently swaying to and fro,  
Rocked by all the winds that blow,  
Bright with sunshine from above,  
Dark with shadow from below,  
Beak to beak and breast to breast  
305 In the cradle of their nest,  
Lie the fledglings of our love.

## ECHO.

Love ! love !

## EPIMETHEUS.

Hark ! listen ! Hear how sweetly overhead  
The feathered flute-players pipe their songs of  
love,  
And Echo answers, love and only love.

## CHORUS OF BIRDS.

310 Every flutter of the wing,  
Every note of song we sing,  
Every murmur, every tone,  
Is of love and love alone.

## ECHO.

Love alone !

EPIMETHEUS.

Who would not love, if loving she might be  
 315 Changed like Callisto to a star in heaven ?

PANDORA.

Ah, who would love, if loving she might be  
 Like Semele consumed and burnt to ashes ?

EPIMETHEUS.

Whence knowest thou these stories ?

PANDORA.

Hermes taught me ;  
 He told me all the history of the Gods.

CHORUS OF REEDS.

320 Evermore a sound shall be  
 In the reeds of Arcady,  
 Evermore a low lament  
 Of unrest and discontent,  
 As the story is retold  
 325 Of the nymph so coy and cold,  
 Who with frightened feet outran  
 The pursuing steps of Pan.

EPIMETHEUS.

The pipe of Pan out of these reeds is made,  
 And when he plays upon it to the shepherds  
 330 They pity him, so mournful is the sound.  
 Be thou not coy and cold as Syrinx was.

PANDORA.

Nor thou as Pan be rude and mannerless.

PROMETHEUS (*without*).

Ho ! Epimetheus !

EPIMETHEUS.

'T is my brother's voice ;  
A sound unwelcome and inopportune  
335 As was the braying of Silenus' ass,  
Once heard in Cybele's garden.

PANDORA.

Let me go.  
I would not be found here. I would not see him.

*She escapes among the trees.*

CHORUS OF DRYADES.

Haste and hide thee,  
Ere too late,  
340 In these thickets intricate ;  
Lest Prometheus  
See and chide thee,  
Lest some hurt  
Or harm betide thee,  
345 Haste and hide thee !

PROMETHEUS (*entering*).

Who was it fled from here ? I saw a shape  
Flitting among the trees.

EPIMETHEUS.

It was Pandora.

PROMETHEUS.

O Epimetheus ! Is it then in vain  
That I have warned thee ? Let me now implore.  
350 Thou harborest in thy house a dangerous guest.

EPIMETHEUS.

Whom the Gods love they honor with such guests.

PROMETHEUS.

Whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad.

EPIMETHEUS.

Shall I refuse the gifts they send to me ?

PROMETHEUS.

Reject all gifts that come from higher powers.

EPIMETHEUS.

355 Such gifts as this are not to be rejected.

PROMETHEUS.

Make not thyself the slave of any woman.

EPIMETHEUS.

Make not thyself the judge of any man.

PROMETHEUS.

I judge thee not ; for thou art more than man ;  
Thou art descended from Titanic race,  
360 And hast a Titan's strength, and faculties  
That make thee godlike ; and thou sittest here  
Like Heracles spinning Omphale's flax,  
And beaten with her sandals.

352. An old Latin proverb, *Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat.*

EPIMETHEUS.

O my brother!

Thou drivest me to madness with thy taunts.

PROMETHEUS.

365 And me thou drivest to madness with thy follies.  
 Come with me to my tower on Caucasus :  
 See there my forges in the roaring caverns,  
 Beneficent to man, and taste the joy  
 That springs from labor. Read with me the stars,  
 370 And learn the virtues that lie hidden in plants,  
 And all things that are useful.

EPIMETHEUS.

O my brother!

I am not as thou art. Thou dost inherit  
 Our father's strength, and I our mother's weakness :  
 The softness of the Oceanides,  
 375 The yielding nature that cannot resist.

PROMETHEUS.

Because thou wilt not.

EPIMETHEUS.

Nay ; because I cannot.

PROMETHEUS.

Assert thyself ; rise up to thy full height ;  
 Shake from thy soul these dreams effeminate,  
 These passions born of indolence and ease.  
 380 Resolve, and thou art free. But breathe the air  
 Of mountains, and their unapproachable summits  
 Will lift thee to the level of themselves.

EPIMETHEUS.

The roar of forests and of waterfalls,  
 The rushing of a mighty wind with loud  
 385 And undistinguishable voices calling,  
 Are in my ear !

PROMETHEUS.

Oh, listen and obey.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thou leadest me as a child. I follow thee.

*They go out.*

CHORUS OF OREADES.

Centuries old are the mountains ;  
 Their foreheads wrinkled and rifted  
 390 Helios crowns by day,  
 Pallid Selene by night ;  
 From their bosoms up tossed  
 The snows are driven and drifted,  
 Like Tithonus' beard  
 395 Streaming dishevelled and white.

Thunder and tempest of wind  
 Their trumpets blow in the vastness ;  
 Phantoms of mist and rain,  
 Cloud and the shadow of cloud,  
 400 Pass and repass by the gates  
 Of their inaccessible fastness ;  
 Ever unmoved they stand,  
 Solemn, eternal, and proud.

## VOICES OF THE WATERS.

Flooded by rain and snow  
 405 In their inexhaustible sources,  
     Swollen by affluent streams  
     Hurrying onward and hurled  
     Headlong over the crags,  
     The impetuous water-courses  
 410 Rush and roar and plunge  
     Down to the nethermost world.

Say, have the solid rocks  
     Into streams of silver been melted,  
     Flowing over the plains,  
 415 Spreading to lakes in the fields ?  
     Or have the mountains, the giants,  
     The ice-helmed, the forest-belted,  
     Scattered their arms abroad ;  
     Flung in the meadows their shields ?

## VOICES OF THE WINDS.

420 High on their turreted cliffs  
     That bolts of thunder have shattered,  
     Storm-winds muster and blow  
     Trumpets of terrible breath ;  
     Then from the gateways rush,  
 425 And before them routed and scattered  
     Sullen the cloud-rack flies,  
     Pale with the pallor of death.

Onward the hurricane rides,  
     And flee for shelter the shepherds ;

430 White are the frightened leaves,  
Harvests with terror are white ;  
Panic seizes the herds,  
And even the lions and leopards,  
Prowling no longer for prey,  
435 Crouch in their caverns with fright.

## VOICES OF THE FOREST.

Guarding the mountains around  
Majestic the forests are standing,  
Bright are their crested helms,  
Dark is their armor of leaves ;  
440 Filled with the breath of freedom  
Each bosom subsiding, expanding,  
Now like the ocean sinks,  
Now like the ocean upheaves.

Planted firm on the rock,  
445 With foreheads stern and defiant,  
Loud they shout to the winds,  
Loud to the tempest they call ;  
Naught but Olympian thunders,  
That blasted Titan and Giant,  
450 Them can uproot and o'erthrew,  
Shaking the earth with their fall.

## CHORUS OF OREADES.

These are the Voices Three  
Of winds and forests and fountains,  
Voices of earth and of air,  
455 Murmur and rushing of streams,

Making together one sound,  
 The mysterious voice of the mountains,  
 Waking the sluggard that sleeps,  
 Waking the dreamer of dreams.

460 These are the Voices Three,  
 That speak of endless endeavor,  
 Speak of endurance and strength,  
 Triumph and fulness of fame,  
 Sounding about the world,

465 An inspiration forever,  
 Stirring the hearts of men,  
 Shaping their end and their aim.

## VII.

## THE HOUSE OF EPIMETHEUS.

## PANDORA.

LEFT to myself I wander as I will,  
 And as my fancy leads me, through this house,

470 Nor could I ask a dwelling more complete  
 Were I indeed the Goddess that he deems me.  
 No mansion of Olympus, framed to be  
 The habitation of the Immortal Gods,  
 Can be more beautiful. And this is mine ;

475 And more than this, the love wherewith he crowns me.  
 As if impelled by powers invisible  
 And irresistible, my steps return  
 Unto this spacious hall. All corridors  
 And passages lead hither, and all doors

480 But open into it. Yon mysterious chest  
 Attracts and fascinates me. Would I knew

What there lies hidden ! But the oracle  
Forbids. Ah me ! The secret then is safe.  
So would it be if it were in my keeping.

485 A crowd of shadowy faces from the mirrors  
That line these walls are watching me. I dare not  
Lift up the lid. A hundred times the act  
Would be repeated, and the secret seen  
By twice a hundred incorporeal eyes.

*She walks to the other side of the hall.*

490 My feet are weary, wandering to and fro,  
My eyes with seeing and my heart with waiting.  
I will lie here and rest till he returns,  
Who is my dawn, my day, my Helios.

*Throws herself upon a couch and falls asleep.*

ZEPHYRUS.

Come from thy caverns dark and deep,  
495 O son of Erebus and Night ;  
All sense of hearing and of sight  
Enfold in the serene delight  
And quietude of sleep !

Set all thy silent sentinels  
500 To bar and guard the Ivory Gate,  
And keep the evil dreams of fate  
And falsehood and infernal hate  
Imprisoned in their cells.

But open wide the Gate of Horn,  
505 Whence, beautiful as planets, rise  
The dreams of truth, with starry eyes,  
And all the wondrous prophecies  
And visions of the morn.

## CHORUS OF DREAMS FROM THE IVORY GATE.

Ye sentinels of sleep,

510 It is in vain ye keep

Your drowsy watch before the Ivory Gate ;

Though closed the portal seems,

The airy feet of dreams

Ye cannot thus in walls incarcerate.

515 We phantoms are and dreams

Born by Tartarean streams,

As ministers of the infernal powers ;

O son of Erebus

And Night, behold ! we thus

520 Elude your watchful warders on the towers

From gloomy Tartarus

The Fates have summoned us

To whisper in her ear, who lies asleep,

A tale to fan the fire

525 Of her insane desire

To know a secret that the Gods would keep.

This passion, in their ire,

The Gods themselves inspire,

To vex mankind with evils manifold,

530 So that disease and pain

O'er the whole earth may reign,

And nevermore return the Age of Gold.

PANDORA (*waking*).

A voice said in my sleep : “ Do not delay :

Do not delay ; the golden moments fly ;

535 The oracle hath forbidden ; yet not thee

Doth it forbid, but Epimetheus only!"

I am alone. These faces in the mirrors  
 Are but the shadows and phantoms of myself;  
 They cannot help nor hinder. No one sees me,  
 540 Save the all-seeing Gods, who, knowing good  
 And knowing evil, have created me  
 Such as I am, and filled me with desire  
 Of knowing good and evil like themselves.

*She approaches the chest.*

I hesitate no longer. Weal or woe,  
 545 Or life or death the moment shall decide.

*She lifts the lid. A dense mist rises from the chest and fills the room. PANDORA falls senseless on the floor. Storm without.*

CHORUS OF DREAMS FROM THE GATE OF HORN.

Yes, the moment shall decide!  
 It already hath decided;  
 And the secret once confided  
 To the keeping of the Titan  
 550 Now is flying far and wide,  
 Whispered, told on every side,  
 To disquiet and to frighten.

Fever of the heart and brain,  
 Sorrow, pestilence, and pain,  
 555 Moans of anguish, maniac laughter,  
 All the evils that hereafter  
 Shall afflict and vex mankind,  
 All into the air have risen  
 From the chambers of their prison;  
 560 Only Hope remains behind.

## VIII.

## IN THE GARDEN.

## EPIMETHEUS.

THE storm is past, but it hath left behind it  
 Ruin and desolation. All the walks  
 Are strewn with shattered boughs ; the birds are silent ;  
 The flowers, downtrodden by the wind, lie dead ;  
 565 The swollen rivulet sobs with secret pain ;  
 The melancholy reeds whisper together  
 As if some dreadful deed had been committed  
 They dare not name, and all the air is heavy  
 With an unspoken sorrow ! Premonitions,  
 570 Foreshadowings of some terrible disaster,  
 Oppress my heart. Ye Gods, avert the omen !

PANDORA, (*coming from the house*).

O Epimetheus, I no longer dare  
 To lift mine eyes to thine, nor hear thy voice,  
 Being no longer worthy of thy love.

## EPIMETHEUS.

575 What hast thou done ?

## PANDORA.

Forgive me not, but kill me.

## EPIMETHEUS.

What hast thou done ?

## PANDORA.

I pray for death, not pardon.

EPIMETHEUS.

What hast thou done ?

PANDORA.

I dare not speak of it.

EPIMETHEUS.

Thy pallor and thy silence terrify me !

PANDORA.

I have brought wrath and ruin on thy house !  
580 My heart hath braved the oracle that guarded  
The fatal secret from us, and my hand  
Lifted the lid of the mysterious chest !

EPIMETHEUS.

Then all is lost ! I am indeed undone.

PANDORA.

I pray for punishment, and not for pardon.

EPIMETHEUS.

585 Mine is the fault, not thine. On me shall fall  
The vengeance of the Gods, for I betrayed  
Their secret when, in evil hour, I said  
It was a secret ; when, in evil hour,  
I left thee here alone to this temptation.  
590 Why did I leave thee ?

PANDORA.

Why didst thou return ?

Eternal absence would have been to me  
The greatest punishment. To be left alone

And face to face with my own crime, had been  
 Just retribution. Upon me, ye Gods,  
 595 Let all your vengeance fall !

## EPIMETHEUS.

On thee and me.

I do not love thee less for what is done,  
 And cannot be undone. Thy very weakness  
 Hath brought thee nearer to me, and henceforth  
 My love will have a sense of pity in it,  
 500 Making it less a worship than before.

## PANDORA.

Pity me not ; pity is degradation.  
 Love me and kill me.

## EPIMETHEUS.

Beautiful Pandora !

Thou art a Goddess still !

## PANDORA.

I am a woman ;  
 And the insurgent demon in my nature,  
 505 That made me brave the oracle, revolts  
 At pity and compassion. Let me die ;  
 What else remains for me ?

## EPIMETHEUS.

Youth, hope, and love :  
 To build a new life on a ruined life,  
 To make the future fairer than the past,  
 610 And make the past appear a troubled dream.  
 Even now in passing through the garden walks

Upon the ground I saw a fallen nest  
 Ruined and full of rain ; and over me  
 Beheld the uncomplaining birds already  
 615 Busy in building a new habitation.

## PANDORA.

Auspicious omen !

## EPIMETHEUS.

May the Eumenides  
 Put out their torches and behold us not,  
 And fling away their whips of scorpions  
 And touch us not.

## PANDORA.

Me let them punish.

620 Only through punishment of our evil deeds,  
 Only through suffering, are we reconciled  
 To the immortal Gods and to ourselves.

## CHORUS OF THE EUMENIDES.

Never shall souls like these  
 Escape the Eumenides,  
 625 The daughters dark of Acheron and Night !  
 Unquenched our torches glare,  
 Our scourges in the air  
 Send forth prophetic sounds before they smite.

Never by lapse of time  
 630 The soul defaced by crime  
 Into its former self returns again ;

For every guilty deed  
Holds in itself the seed  
Of retribution and undying pain.

635 Never shall be the loss  
Restored, till Helios  
Hath purified them with his heavenly fires ;  
Then what was lost is won,  
And the new life begun,  
640 Kindled with nobler passions and desires.

## THE HANGING OF THE CRANE.

“ONE morning in the spring of 1867,” writes Mr. T. B. Aldrich, “Mr. Longfellow came to the little home in Pinckney Street [Boston], where we had set up house-keeping in the light of our honeymoon. As we lingered a moment at the dining-room door, Mr. Longfellow turning to me said, ‘Ah, Mr. Aldrich, your small round table will not always be closed. By and by you will find new young faces clustering about it; as years go on, leaf after leaf will be added, until the time comes when the young guests will take flight, one by one, to build nests of their own elsewhere. Gradually the long table will shrink to a circle again, leaving two old people sitting there alone together. This is the story of life, the sweet and pathetic poem of the fireside. Make an idyl of it. I give the idea to you.’ Several months afterward, I received a note from Mr. Longfellow in which he expressed a desire to use this *motif* in case I had done nothing in the matter. The theme was one peculiarly adapted to his sympathetic handling, and out of it grew *The Hanging of the Crane.*” The poem appears to have been written near the end of 1873. It was first published in the *New York Ledger*, March 28, 1874, and afterward as a book with illustrations, in the fall of the same year.

## I.

THE lights are out, and gone are all the guests  
That thronging came with merriment and jests  
    To celebrate the Hanging of the Crane  
In the new house, — into the night are gone ;  
    But still the fire upon the hearth burns on,  
        And I alone remain.

O fortunate, O happy day,  
When a new household finds its place  
Among the myriad homes of earth,  
Like a new star just sprung to birth,  
    10 And rolled on its harmonious way  
        Into the boundless realms of space !

So said the guests in speech and song,  
As in the chimney, burning bright,  
We hung the iron crane to-night,  
    16 And merry was the feast and long.

## II.

AND now I sit and muse on what may be,  
And in my vision see, or seem to see,  
    Through floating vapors interfused with light,  
Shapes indeterminate, that gleam and fade,  
    20 As shadows passing into deeper shade  
        Sink and elude the sight.

For two alone, there in the hall,  
 Is spread the table round and small ;  
 Upon the polished silver shine  
 The evening lamps, but, more divine,  
 25     The light of love shines over all ;  
 Of love, that says not mine and thine,  
 But ours, for ours is thine and mine.

They want no guests, to come between  
 Their tender glances like a screen,  
 30 And tell them tales of land and sea,  
 And whatsoever may betide  
 The great, forgotten world outside ;  
 They want no guests ; they needs must be  
 Each other's own best company.

## III.

35 THE picture fades ; as at a village fair  
 A showman's views, dissolving into air,  
 Again appear transfigured on the screen,  
 So in my fancy this ; and now once more,  
 In part transfigured, through the open door  
 40     Appears the selfsame scene.

Seated, I see the two again,  
 But not alone ; they entertain  
 A little angel unaware,  
 With face as round as is the moon  
 45 A royal guest with flaxen hair,  
 Who, throned upon his lofty chair,  
 Drums on the table with his spoon,  
 Then drops it careless on the floor,  
 To grasp at things unseen before.

50 Are these celestial manners ? these  
 The ways that win, the arts that please ?  
 Ah yes ; consider well the guest,  
 And whatsoe'er he does seems best ;  
 He ruleth by the right divine

55 Of helplessness, so lately born  
 In purple chambers of the morn,  
 As sovereign over thee and thine.  
 He speaketh not ; and yet there lies  
 A conversation in his eyes ;

60 The golden silence of the Greek,  
 The gravest wisdom of the wise,  
 Not spoken in language, but in looks  
 More legible than printed books,  
 As if he could but would not speak.

65 And now, O monarch absolute,  
 Thy power is put to proof ; for, lo !  
 Resistless, fathomless, and slow,  
 The nurse comes rustling like the sea,  
 And pushes back thy chair and thee,

70 And so good night to King Canute.

## IV.

As one who walking in a forest sees  
 A lovely landscape through the parted trees,  
 Then sees it not, for boughs that intervene ;  
 Or as we see the moon sometimes revealed  
 75 Through drifting clouds, and then again concealed,  
 So I behold the scene.

60. There is a proverb, "Speech is silvern ; silence is golden."

70. The story of King Canute's rebuke of his courtiers, by showing how powerless he was before the tide, may be found in Freeman's *Old English History for Children*, p. 240.

There are two guests at table now ;  
The king, deposed and older grown,  
No longer occupies the throne, —  
80 The crown is on his sister's brow ;  
A Princess from the Fairy Isles,  
The very pattern girl of girls,  
All covered and embowered in curls,  
Rose-tinted from the Isle of Flowers,  
85 And sailing with soft, silken sails  
From far-off Dreamland into ours.  
Above their bowls with rims of blue  
Four azure eyes of deeper hue  
Are looking, dreamy with delight ;  
90 Limpid as planets that emerge  
Above the ocean's rounded verge,  
Soft-shining through the summer night.  
Steadfast they gaze, yet nothing see  
Beyond the horizon of their bowls ;  
95 Nor care they for the world that rolls  
With all its freight of troubled souls  
Into the days that are to be.

## V.

AGAIN the tossing boughs shut out the scene,  
Again the drifting vapors intervene,  
100 And the moon's pallid disk is hidden quite ;  
And now I see the table wider grown,  
As round a pebble into water thrown  
Dilates a ring of light.

I see the table wider grown,  
105 I see it garlanded with guests,

As if fair Ariadne's Crown  
 Out of the sky had fallen down ;  
 Maidens within whose tender breasts  
 A thousand restless hopes and fears,  
 110 Forth reaching to the coming years,  
 Flutter awhile, then quiet lie,  
 Like timid birds that fain would fly,  
 But do not dare to leave their nests ; —  
 And youths, who in their strength elate  
 115 Challenge the van and front of fate,  
 Eager as champions to be  
 In the divine knight-errantry  
 Of youth, that travels sea and land  
 Seeking adventures, or pursues,  
 120 Through cities, and through solitudes  
 Frequented by the lyric Muse,  
 The phantom with the beckoning hand,  
 That still allures and still eludes.  
 O sweet illusions of the brain !  
 125 O sudden thrills of fire and frost !  
 The world is bright while ye remain,  
 And dark and dead when ye are lost !

## VI.

THE meadow-brook, that seemeth to stand still,  
 Quickens its current as it nears the mill ;  
 130 And so the stream of Time that lingereth  
 In level places, and so dull appears,  
 Runs with a swifter current as it nears  
 The gloomy mills of Death.

122. Perhaps the poet had in mind those lines of Tickell, —

“ I hear a voice you cannot hear,  
 Which says I must not stay ;  
 I see a hand you cannot see,  
 Which beckons me away.”

And now, like the magician's scroll,  
135 That in the owner's keeping shrinks  
With every wish he speaks or thinks,  
Till the last wish consumes the whole,  
The table dwindleth, and again  
I see the two alone remain.

140 The crown of stars is broken in parts ;  
Its jewels, brighter than the day,  
Have one by one been stolen away  
To shine in other homes and hearts.  
One is a wanderer now afar

145 In Ceylon or in Zanzibar,  
Or sunny regions of Cathay ;  
And one is in the boisterous camp  
Mid clink of arms and horses' tramp,  
And battle's terrible array.

150 I see the patient mother read,  
With aching heart, of wrecks that float  
Disabled on those seas remote,  
Or of some great heroic deed  
On battle-fields, where thousands bleed

155 To lift one hero into fame.  
Anxious she bends her graceful head  
Above these chronicles of pain,  
And trembles with a secret dread  
Lest there among the drowned or slain

160 She find the one beloved name.

## VII.

AFTER a day of cloud and wind and rain  
Sometimes the setting sun breaks out again,  
And, touching all the darksome woods with light,  
Smiles on the fields, until they laugh and sing,

165 Then like a ruby from the horizon's ring  
Drops down into the night.

What see I now ? The night is fair,  
The storm of grief, the clouds of care,  
The wind, the rain, have passed away ;

170 The lamps are lit, the fires burn bright,  
The house is full of life and light :

It is the Golden Wedding day.

The guests come thronging in once more,  
Quick footsteps sound along the floor,

175 The trooping children crowd the stair,  
And in and out and everywhere  
Flashes along the corridor  
The sunshine of their golden hair.  
On the round table in the hall

180 Another Ariadne's Crown  
Out of the sky hath fallen down ;  
More than one Monarch of the Moon  
Is drumming with his silver spoon ;  
The light of love shines over all.

185 O fortunate, O happy day !  
The people sing, the people say.  
The ancient bridegroom and the bride,  
Smiling contented and serene  
Upon the blithe, bewildering scene,

190 Behold, well pleased, on every side  
Their forms and features multiplied,  
As the reflection of a light  
Between two burnished mirrors gleams,  
Or lamps upon a bridge at night

195 Stretch on and on before the sight,  
Till the long vista endless seems.

## MORITURI SALUTAMUS.

### POEM FOR THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CLASS OF 1825 IN BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

Tempora labuntur, tacitisque senescimus annis,  
Et fugiunt freno non remorante dies.

OVID, *Fastorum*, Lib. vi.

[Time slips away ;  
The years are silent as we grow in age,  
Nor curb restrains the swiftly flying day.]

IN October, 1874, Mr. Longfellow was urged to write a poem for the fiftieth anniversary of the graduation of his college class to be held the next summer. At first he said that he could not write the poem, so averse was he from occasional poems, and so very reluctant to speak or read in public ; but a sudden thought seems to have struck him, very likely upon seeing a representation of Gerome's famous picture, and ten days later he notes in his diary that he had finished the writing. In a letter written March 30, 1875, to his friend George W. Greene, he says : "I am glad that no college class can have more than one semi-centennial anniversary. It makes me nervous to think of it. I do not like to hear the subject spoken of ; and when I look at the poem, it gives me a shudder. But what nonsense this is ! I have no doubt everything will go off well ; and if it does not, there will be no great harm done. Wednesday, the seventh of July, is the appointed day." He

read the poem before the large audience gathered in the church at Brunswick, and was greatly relieved to find that he was to read it from the pulpit. "Let me cover myself as much as possible," he said humorously; "I wish it might be entirely."

The painting by Gerome, referred to, represents a Roman arena, where the gladiators, about to engage in mortal combat, salute the emperor, who with a great concourse of people is to witness the scene. Beneath the painting, Gerome, following a popular tradition, wrote the words, *Ave Cæsar, Imperator, Morituri te Salutant*: "Hail, Cæsar, Emperor! those who go to their death salute thee." The reference to a gladiatorial combat, which these words imply, is doubted by some scholars, who quote ancient authors as using the phrase in connection with the great sea-fight exhibition given by the Emperor on Lacus Fucinus. The combatants on that occasion were condemned criminals, who were to fight until one of the sides was slain, unless spared by the mercy of the Emperor.

"O CÆSAR, we who are about to die  
Salute you!" was the gladiators' cry  
In the arena, standing face to face  
With death and with the Roman populace.

• O ye familiar scenes, — ye groves of pine,  
That once were mine and are no longer mine, —  
Thou river, widening through the meadows green  
To the vast sea, so near and yet unseen, —  
Ye halls, in whose seclusion and repose  
• Phantoms of fame, like exhalations, rose  
And vanished, — we who are about to die

Salute you; earth and air and sea and sky,  
 And the Imperial Sun that scatters down  
 His sovereign splendors upon grove and town.

15 Ye do not answer us ! ye do not hear !  
 We are forgotten ; and in your austere  
 And calm indifference, ye little care  
 Whether we come or go, or whence or where.  
 What passing generations fill these halls,  
 20 What passing voices echo from these walls,  
 Ye heed not ; we are only as the blast,  
 A moment heard, and then forever past.

Not so the teachers who in earlier days  
 Led our bewildered feet through learning's maze ;  
 25 They answer us — alas ! what have I said ?  
 What greetings come there from the voiceless dead ?  
 What salutation, welcome, or reply ?  
 What pressure from the hands that lifeless lie ?  
 They are no longer here ; they all are gone  
 30 Into the land of shadows, — all save one.  
 Honor and reverence, and the good repute  
 That follows faithful service as its fruit,  
 Be unto him, whom living we salute.

The great Italian poet, when he made  
 35 His dreadful journey to the realms of shade,  
 Met there the old instructor of his youth,  
 And cried in tones of pity and of ruth :

29. To one of these teachers, Parker Cleaveland, Mr. Longfellow wrote a sonnet, when revisiting Brunswick to read his poem.  
 30. The one exception was Professor Alpheus Spring Packard, who died a few years afterward.  
 36. Brunetto Latini was Dante's friend and teacher. The lines which follow are a free rendering of *Inferno*, xv. 82-87.

“ Oh, never from the memory of my heart  
 Your dear, paternal image shall depart,  
 40 Who while on earth, ere yet by death surprised,  
 Taught me how mortals are immortalized ;  
 How grateful am I for that patient care  
 All my life long my language shall declare.”

To-day we make the poet’s words our own,  
 45 And utter them in plaintive undertone ;  
 Nor to the living only be they said,  
 But to the other living called the dead,  
 Whose dear, paternal images appear  
 Not wrapped in gloom, but robed in sunshine here ;  
 50 Whose simple lives, complete and without flaw,  
 Were part and parcel of great Nature’s law ;  
 Who said not to their Lord, as if afraid,  
 “ Here is thy talent in a napkin laid,”  
 But labored in their sphere, as men who live  
 55 In the delight that work alone can give.  
 Peace be to them ; eternal peace and rest,  
 And the fulfilment of the great behest :  
 “ Ye have been faithful over a few things,  
 Over ten cities shall ye reign as kings.”

60 And ye who fill the places we once filled,  
 And follow in the furrows that we tilled,  
 Young men, whose generous hearts are beating high,  
 We who are old, and are about to die,  
 Salute you ; hail you ; take your hands in ours,  
 65 And crown you with our welcome as with flowers !

How beautiful is youth ! how bright it gleams  
 With its illusions, aspirations, dreams !

Book of Beginnings, Story without End,  
Each maid a heroine, and each man a friend !

70 Aladdin's Lamp and Fortunatus' Purse,  
That holds the treasures of the universe !  
All possibilities are in its hands,  
No danger daunts it, and no foe withstands ;  
In its sublime audacity of faith,

75 " Be thou removed ! " it to the mountain saith,  
And with ambitious feet, secure and proud,  
Ascends the ladder leaning on the cloud !

As ancient Priam at the Scæan gate  
Sat on the walls of Troy in regal state

80 With the old men, too old and weak to fight,  
Chirping like grasshoppers in their delight  
To see the embattled hosts, with spear and shield,  
Of Trojans and Achaians in the field ;  
So from the snowy summits of our years

85 We see you in the plain, as each appears,  
And question of you ; asking, " Who is he  
That towers above the others ? Which may be  
Atreides, Menelaus, Odysseus,  
Ajax the great, or bold Idomeneus ? "

90 Let him not boast who puts his armor on  
As he who puts it off, the battle done.  
Study yourselves ; and most of all note well  
Wherein kind Nature meant you to excel.  
Not every blossom ripens into fruit ;

95 Minerva, the inventress of the flute,  
Flung it aside, when she her face surveyed  
Distorted in a fountain as she played ;

78. See Iliad III. 145-155.

The unlucky Marsyas found it, and his fate  
Was one to make the bravest hesitate.

100 Write on your doors the saying wise and old,  
“Be bold! be bold!” and everywhere — “Be bold;  
Be not too bold!” Yet better the excess  
Than the defect; better the more than less;  
Better like Hector in the field to die,  
105 Than like a perfumed Paris turn and fly.

And now, my classmates; ye remaining few  
That number not the half of those we knew,  
Ye, against whose familiar names not yet  
The fatal asterisk of death is set,

110 Ye I salute! The horologe of Time  
Strikes the half-century with a solemn chime,  
And summons us together once again,  
The joy of meeting not unmixed with pain.

Where are the others? Voices from the deep

115 Caverns of darkness answer me: “They sleep!”  
I name no names; instinctively I feel  
Each at some well-remembered grave will kneel,  
And from the inscription wipe the weeds and  
moss,

For every heart best knoweth its own loss.

120 I see their scattered gravestones gleaming white  
Through the pale dusk of the impending night;  
O'er all alike the impartial sunset throws  
Its golden lilies mingled with the rose;  
We give to each a tender thought, and pass  
125 Out of the graveyards with their tangled grass,

101. See Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book III. Canto xi., stanza 54.

Unto these scenes frequented by our feet  
When we were young, and life was fresh and sweet.

What shall I say to you ? What can I say  
Better than silence is ? When I survey  
130 This throng of faces turned to meet my own,  
Friendly and fair, and yet to me unknown,  
Transformed the very landscape seems to be ;  
It is the same, yet not the same to me.  
So many memories crowd upon my brain,  
135 So many ghosts are in the wooded plain,  
I fain would steal away, with noiseless tread,  
As from a house where some one lieth dead.  
I cannot go ; — I pause ; — I hesitate ;  
My feet reluctant linger at the gate ;  
140 As one who struggles in a troubled dream  
To speak and cannot, to myself I seem.

Vanish the dream ! Vanish the idle fears !  
Vanish the rolling mists of fifty years !  
Whatever time or space may intervene,  
145 I will not be a stranger in this scene.  
Here every doubt, all indecision, ends ;  
Hail, my companions, comrades, classmates, friends !

Ah me ! the fifty years since last we met  
Seem to me fifty folios bound and set  
150 By Time, the great transcriber, on his shelves,  
Wherein are written the histories of ourselves.  
What tragedies, what comedies, are there ;  
What joy and grief, what rapture and despair !  
What chronicles of triumph and defeat,  
155 Of struggle, and temptation, and retreat !

What records of regrets, and doubts, and fears !  
 What pages blotted, blistered by our tears !  
 What lovely landscapes on the margin shine,  
 What sweet, angelic faces, what divine  
 160 And holy images of love and trust,  
 Undimmed by age, unsoiled by damp or dust !

Whose hand shall dare to open and explore  
 These volumes, closed and clasped for evermore ?  
 Not mine. With reverential feet I pass ;  
 165 I hear a voice that cries, “ Alas ! alas !  
 Whatever hath been written shall remain,  
 Nor be erased nor written o'er again ;  
 The unwritten only still belongs to thee :  
 Take heed, and ponder well what that shall be.”

170 As children frightened by a thunder-cloud  
 Are reassured if some one reads aloud  
 A tale of wonder, with enchantment fraught,  
 Or wild adventure, that diverts their thought,  
 Let me endeavor with a tale to chase  
 175 The gathering shadows of the time and place,  
 And banish what we all too deeply feel  
 Wholly to say, or wholly to conceal.

In mediæval Rome, I know not where,  
 There stood an image with its arm in air,  
 180 And on its lifted finger, shining clear,  
 A golden ring with the device, “ Strike here ! ”  
 Greatly the people wondered, though none guessed  
 The meaning that these words but half expressed,

174. The original of this story is to be found in Tale CVII. of *Gesta Romanorum* : *Of Remembering Death and Forgetting Things Temporal.*

Until a learned clerk, who at noonday  
 185 With downcast eyes was passing on his way,  
 Paused, and observed the spot, and marked it well,  
 Whereon the shadow of the finger fell ;  
 And, coming back at midnight, delved, and found  
 A secret stairway leading under ground.

190 Down this he passed into a spacious hall,  
 Lit by a flaming jewel on the wall ;  
 And opposite, in threatening attitude,  
 With bow and shaft a brazen statue stood.  
 Upon its forehead, like a coronet,

195 Were these mysterious words of menace set :  
 “That which I am, I am ; my fatal aim  
 None can escape, not even yon luminous flame !”

Midway the hall was a fair table placed,  
 With cloth of gold, and golden cups enchased  
 200 With rubies, and the plates and knives were gold,  
 And gold the bread and viands manifold.  
 Around it, silent, motionless, and sad,  
 Were seated gallant knights in armor clad,  
 And ladies beautiful with plume and zone,  
 205 But they were stone, their hearts within were stone ;  
 And the vast hall was filled in every part  
 With silent crowds, stony in face and heart.

Long at the scene, bewildered and amazed,  
 The trembling clerk in speechless wonder gazed ;  
 210 Then from the table, by his greed made bold,  
 He seized a goblet and a knife of gold,  
 And suddenly from their seats the guests upsprang,  
 The vaulted ceiling with loud clamors rang,  
 The archer sped his arrow, at their call,

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